Rome 13th Oct. 1872

My dear Maria

Many thanks for yours of the 7th inst. which gives me much news that I was longing to get - I am grieved the more at your loneliness as I cannot help you except by my scribbling so I am glad to tell you that I am now well set up in my house with Dr Valeriani, his wife & sister - he takes all charge, we dine together & my good old Serv.t cooks - altogether I feel comfortable & even fortunate in such an arrangement - I am to pay a certain sum a month, my house is rent free to me & I can just make a do of it, leaving me enough for a Cab now & then (4. 2 a day for board &c) Upon the whole I dont think I have ever been so comfortable, for as I have no longer any official responsibility I am left in great tranquility, but my pain & languish as for it requires a degree of nerve which I am afraid I have no longer, yet I made a good drawing of the Bride, & therefore hope in the mor.g I try & take a long walk of 2 or 3

Always coming home without a leg to stand on but the Doctor assures me that in this way I shall keep well up for many years — another comfort is that I have conquered all my enemies, not only by my patience & good temper, but by my having more talent, in wit & point than any of them on this cruel subject I am at last content & quiet — 'tis certain English & not Italians who have attempted to destroy me, no doubt my having raised the Consulate by doing good has caused all this hatred, & envy — yet I see them all wondering at my talent now, which I myself cannot so well perceive — yet I must have great talent to have sustained myself in such high & difficult positions, even in my painting for of all the numbers of English artists coming here I have not seen one to compare with me and yet they all seem to have had a better beginning so I will not despair of the future

I had already thought of persuading my Arthur to advance you an allowance as I once so pinched, but I'll get Walter to do it — on the 1st Oct. I wrote & sent the £5 for you this trip the Autumn quarter, & I thought he might have been [illegible] an agent during his absence (shooting Deer in the Highlands) & no doubt you have by this

some received it for I find him very attentive & kind
to me. The least thing upsets me as regards my nerves
so I am lucky in sinking down into a quiet life
for as in another year I shall be 80 it is well that
I now catch at every thing with a quick tendency
to what I have now done seems just this for I
have not only a real good Doctor at my elbow, but
an excellent & cheerful companion, clever &
good manager, his wife is even better than himself
& is a skilful cook.

Providence is very indulgent to me in almost
every thing, my prayers are heard & I am saved
at times against myself & my mistakes, for
I am now astonished at the high career I have
always been aiming at but my humble beginning
I dont know if you & my
brothers ever look'd for more than I have done
from me
I am very sensible of many sad mistakes, but
yet I see the enormous difficulties cured by
my pride & obstinacy, but peace be to me, for I
have so much to be thankful for. The gifts of God
have been great compared to my deficiencies, I
know how kindly & affectionately you always
think of me, also my dear brothers the same
The Doctor has brought all his furniture to my
house which is quite large enough for both of us as

understand housekeeping really well
by to next Summer & my farewell visit I hope
to be able, my last journey home was 70 miles I
did well but was only one day, whereas England
will be a week & I must find a Pd to take care of
me - yet I think I can do it if I make proposals
as I am doing now who knows! &
Charles wrote me a nice little dab of a letter
lately which came fortunately before his Pd Mr Ruth
Don't be alarmed at the account of my enemies
for I have some very faithful friends who
show me great kindness upon whom I can rely -
In the future I have no occasion to have any
thing to do with 'em, either one or the other, so
I now hope —
22d You'll rejoice that at last I have been able
to put a stitch into my painting age testify, without any
fatigue or even langour - This is a great business
as I should be unable to continue for my bread
& well for my painting tho' not for my music
My housekeeping with Dr Valerian succeeds
really well he takes all charge, we are at table
& I find it very pleasant to have such good company
as the Doctor is in practice, he is a Roman

our weather is still hot with showers now & then — I try to walk every day as it does me good but the active painting will do me more good — how I am finishing my "Miracle of the Wine" on hand three yards, but very nearly finished 26 figures, it seems to be very attractive & I think out best my best work — I propose to write on it my age of 80 which in another year I shall be, — If I sell it it will be exhibited at the R.A. & there good hopes as the price has been several times engaged

Now altogether I think I have given you a good posey of news & as my writing is pretty clear I hope you'll be amused & think pleasantly of me — I hope this will find you comfortable with the £10 in hand from Walter, & to day I wrote the order on my part on the 1st October — Not to have to think of any thing but my painting is a great comfort

To day the Italian Parliament opens & the 1st question is to do away with all the Monks & Nuns!! — The Pope threatens to leave, but I don't believe it, for he has a Paradise in the Vatican — what a mess! The King is hunting the Bear & Boar in Calabria

Your loving brother Joe